

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16804

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, CG

SUBJ: ANNOUNCEMENT OF TWO NEW VICE PREMIERS IN CAMBODIA

REF: A. FBIS OW131605Y AUG 75; B. FBIS OW131512Y AUG 75

SUMMARY: THE 13 AUGUST ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE APPOINTMENT OF IENG SARY AND SON SEN AS VICE PREMIERS IN THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION OF CAMBODIA (GRUNK) IS THE FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIGH LEVEL LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENTS SINCE THE FALL OF PHNOM PENH TO THE KHMER COMMUNISTS ON 17 APRIL. MOREOVER, IT INDICATES THE ASCENDENCY OF PRO-HANOI ELEMENTS IN THE KHMER ROUGE AND A DECLINE IN THE INFLUENCE OF GRUNK DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER KHIEU SAMPHAN. END SUMMARY.

1. ON 13 AUGUST THE "VOICE OF THE CAMBODIAN NATIONAL UNITED FRONT" RADIO ANNOUNCED THE APPOINTMENT OF IENG SARY TO BE VICE PREMIER IN CHARGE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SON SEN TO BE VICE PREMIER IN CHARGE OF NATIONAL DEFENSE (REF A). IENG SARY HAD BEEN SERVING AS SPECIAL
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ADVISOR TO THE VICE PREMIER'S OFFICE OF GRUNK AND SON

SEN WAS A FORMER CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE'S NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMED FORCES. BOTH IENG SARY AND SON SEN WERE BORN IN 1930, WERE PROFESSORS AT PHNOM PENH'S LYCEE SISOWATH, AND ARE CONSIDERED IDEOLOGICALLY ATTUNED TO HANOI. BOTH ARE LONG-TIME FOES OF NORODOM SIHANOUK, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CAMBODIAN NATIONAL UNITED FRONT (FUNK), WHOSE AUTHORITY HAS BEEN ERODED IN HIS FIVE YEARS AS NOMINAL HEAD OF THE RESISTANCE TO THE LONG NOL REGIME.

2. THE REPLACEMENT OF KHIEU SAMPHAN BY IENG SARY AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE SUGGESTS A DEMOTION FOR KHIUR WHO HAS BEEN WIDELY CREDITED WITH DIRECTING THE SUCCESSFUL MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST LON NOL. IN THE WAKE OF THE PHNOM PENH RADIO BROADCAST, THE CHINESE NEWS SERVICE HSINHAU ANNOUNCED ON 13 AUGUST THAT KHIEU SAMPHAN AND IENG SARY WOULD BE VISITING PEKING ON 15 AUGUST ON AN "OFFICIAL FRIENDLY VISIT" (REF B).

3. COMMENT. UNMENTIONED SO FAR IS SALOTH SAR WHO, BY VIRTUE OF HIS POSITION AS THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE KHMER COMMUNIST PARTY, IS A FIGURE OF CONSIDERABLE AUTHORITY INSIDE CAMBODIA.

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